

DRAFT

Minutes of the meeting of

THE SCOTTISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS ALLOCATION PANEL

10.45am Monday 22 November 2010
Board Room, NMS, Edinburgh

Received on 6th December. Amendments by IBMR on 9th December.

Present: Professor Ian Ralston (Chair), Ms Jane Robinson (MGS Panel appointee. Present for items 1-9), Mr Stuart Campbell (TTU), Ms Angela Short (TTU), Ms Catherine Wilson (QLTR solicitor) in attendance from item 10 onwards, Mr Neil Curtis (University of Aberdeen), Mr David Connolly (BAJR), Ms Kerry McMillan (NMS) was in attendance throughout and took the minutes.

Apologies: Dr Alison Sheridan (NMS Panel appointee): AS had however provided the Chair in advance with notes on issues of concern to her.

1. Chairman's remarks

It was requested that draft minutes be made available timeously to the Chair, as used to occur, and that thereafter a revised draft would go to Panel members for their observations. This advanced draft could then be placed on the web within the requisite time scale required by the FOI legislation (this timespan is shorter than that between panel meetings), before the finalised minutes were duly signed off at the next panel meeting.

Appraisals of those members of the Panel for whom the Chair was responsible would be held shortly.

2. Minutes of meeting on 9 June 2010

Accepted

3. Deferred cases 12/09 & 214/09,

Case 12/09, Excavation assemblage, Lochhead Quarry

This case was deferred under the guidelines for dealing with human remains discussed at June meeting of the panel. The only local bidder (Angus) was not prepared to accept the skeletal material, which makes up a considerable percentage of the assemblage, whereas the bid from Marischal Museums was prepared to keep the assemblage together. The Panel took the decision to allocate this case to Marischal Museum, but stressed that this case should not be used as a precedent pending a fuller review of the problems posed by human remains in the TT system.

Neil Curtis left the room while this case was discussed.

Case 214/09, Coin from Dumbarton Rock

Both the Hunterian and West Dunbartonshire Council museums submitted further information which the panel considered. It was decided not to reverse the Panel's previous decision but the difficulties faced as the result of the emergence of newer local museums in areas where regional institutions had historically collected and where material that constituted, at least arguably, additions to existing site assemblages was under consideration was noted. This was an issue which the Panel should in due course revisit in relation to providing further guidance to museums in relation to the Code of Practice. The notification to the Hunterian would include a suggestion that the institution should look favourably upon any request by WDC to borrow the material and the possibility of a concordat to reduce the likelihood of such problems in future should be suggested to both parties. IR noted that although the Panel encourages concordats between museums, it cannot enforce the terms contained in them. The Panel agreed that it would be useful if copies of such concordats were made available to, and stored by, the TTU.

4. New cases

CO.TT. no	Object(s)	Reward	Museum
27/10	Medieval cut halfpenny, Prestonpans, East Lothian	£1600	NMS*
28/10	Medieval harness pendant, Tayport, Fife	£175	E Fife
29/10	3 Anglo-Saxon coins and a strap-end, Dumfries, Dumfries and Galloway	waived	Dumfries
30/10	Carved stone head, Port Appin, Argyll & Bute	waived	Kilmartin
31/10	Neolithic carved stone ball, Kirkintilloch, East Dunbartonshire	£1550	Kirkintill
32/10	Roman/Iron Age excavation assemblage, Wedderburn House, Inveresk, East Lothian	n/a	NMS
33/10	Prehistoric – 19 th century excavation assemblage, Portree, Skye, Highland	n/a	DISCLAIM; NMS would make separate arrangements to safeguard the prehistoric component only.
34/10	19 th century excavation assemblage, Hermitage School, Helensburgh, Argyll & Bute	n/a	Argyll & Bute

35/10	Medieval evaluation assemblage, Well Flats Road, Kirkliston, City of Edinburgh	n/a	Edinburgh
36/10	Prehistoric watching brief assemblage, Poniel Quarry, Douglas, South Lanarkshire	n/a	Douglas Museum
37/10	Roman excavation assemblage, Dalkeith, Midlothian	n/a	NMS
38/10	Prehistoric; 19 th century evaluation assemblage, Lower Slackbuie, Inverness, Highland	n/a	Inverness
39/10	Neolithic; Prehistoric excavation assemblage, Slackbuie, Inverness, Highland	n/a	Inverness
40/10	Roman evaluation assemblage, Doune, Stirling	n/a	Stirling
41/10	Roman excavation assemblage, Doune Primary School, Doune, Stirling	n/a	Stirling
42/10	Medieval/post-Medieval evaluation assemblage, Gogarburn Hospital, Edinburgh	n/a	Edinburgh
43/10	Medieval evaluation assemblage, Ballumbie, Angus	n/a	DEFER
44/10	A medieval silver coin, Coldstream, Scottish Borders	£1400	NMS*
45/10	Four medieval and later finds, Whitehills, Aberdeenshire	£20	Aberdeen
46/10	A medieval harness pendant, Duns, Scottish Borders	£45	NMS*
47/10	A Bronze Age spearhead, Dunragit, Dumfries and Galloway	£50	Stranraer
48/10	42 medieval and later objects. Dornoch, Highland	£125	Inverness
49/10	A Napoleonic shoulder belt plate, Rothiemurchus, Highland	£225	Inverness

50/10	A prehistoric countersunk pebble, Broughty Ferry, Dundee	£15	Dundee
51/10	The head of an Early Historic pin, Urquhart, Moray	£30	Elgin
52/10	A medieval seal matrix and finger ring, Baldovan, Angus	£300	Angus
53/10	An Iron Age strap fastener, Kilspindie, Perth and Kinross	£40	Perth
54/10	Medieval gold finger ring, Aberdagle, Perth and Kinross	£1250	Perth
55/10	Medieval harness pendant, Inchyra, Perth and Kinross	£700	Perth
In this case The Panel decided not to reduce the recommended <i>ex gratia</i> sum by 50%, as it would normally do in the case of objects which have been inappropriately cleaned, because the impact on the object had been relatively slight.			
56/10	Post-medieval silver brooch, Balrobert, Highland	£250	Inverness
57/10	Medieval zoomorphic buckle, Cullen, Moray	£250	Elgin
58/10	Medieval enamelled mount, Dechmont, West Lothian	£400	NMS*

* These cases were accepted by the relevant institutions in the absence of bids from local museums.

The finders of 29/10 and 30/10 should receive the standard letter from TTU, complementing them on their public-spiritedness in waiving *ex gratia* payments.

Matters arising from the previous minutes (not considered elsewhere)

SC informed the Panel that the cost of transferring the TTU website to a GSI Government domain would be considerable and perhaps within the region of £10-20,000. It was agreed by the Panel that that cost, which Panel members considered very high in relation to website costs in general, is prohibitively expensive.

5. Panel appointments and annual appraisals

The Chair had been summoned to a meeting at Victoria Quay in August. At that stage, it was not possible to advertise for a replacement for the lay member. Whilst various alternative means of recruiting a lay member were considered, all would only have reached components of ‘the

sector' and would not have reached beyond that. The Chair also made it clear he did not wish to consider renewal beyond 2011. An advertisement for the replacement of a lay panel member, which was previously held by Ron Smith, has since been drafted by the Scottish Government. The new lay member is expected to be recruited in Spring 2011, with a new Panel Chair in place to take over from 2012.

6. SLA/Progress on TT Structure

Meetings have taken place between Victoria Quay, NMS Senior Management, and the Crown Office. As a result, an SLA will be developed and two Treasure Trove Unit posts will be advertised. These posts will be advertised at Grade 3 and Grade 5 and it is understood that they will replace the current posts of Grade 5 (to which SC has been temporarily upgraded) and the temporary Grade 6. Line management will be carried out by the Crown Office, instead of via NMS. IR had requested to David Seers and to the QLTR that the appointment panel should not consist exclusively of NMS staff, as this would send an unfortunate signal with regard to the positioning of the TTU. The Panel had raised concerns that only 2 posts are being advertised as the TTU was previously staffed by 2.5 posts. It hoped that in due course it would have an opportunity to comment on the new structure; in the meantime the Chair had made the earlier discussions which the previous Panel and Head of TTU had had towards the SLA available to the QLTR.

In the light of these reported discussions, IR had been asked by the QLTR to modify his piece prepared for the 2010 Annual Report, which is yet to appear, to welcome these new developments. After due consideration, the Panel, whose views were reflected in the Chair's Report, agreed that this could be done.

7. Finds, assemblages, skeletal material, environmental samples and the RSE

IR noted that the Royal Society of Edinburgh is intending to set up a panel to consider the problems raised by the recovery, storage and conservation of artefactual, environmental and skeletal materials from Scotland.

8. Issues for upcoming meetings

IR will meet with the NCMD (SR) on the 7th of December. IR should be informed of any issues the Panel would like raised. The QLTR and Andrew Brown have also asked to attend this meeting. (This meeting has now been postponed until 14th December because of the weather: IR cannot attend as he is to be abroad)

9. Potential ramifications of the Blair Drummond case

In light of the QLTR asking the TTU for further information regarding how the sum for the Blair Drummond gold was arrived at, IR pointed out the potential risks of information being released which the Panel had not had an opportunity to agree was a true representation of its position.

A related issue concerned appropriate procedures should a museum to which allocation was proposed not be able to raise the recommended ex gratia sum. It was noted that this might be especially problematic if a concordat, supported by the Panel, had been deployed which meant that other possible museums had not bid for particular items.

Jane Robinson left the meeting at this point.

10. QLTR business

Claiming of assemblages

SC brought to the Panels' attention problems associated with allocating assemblages. He had prepared a paper, which had however been pre-circulated to some panel members only.

It was agreed by the Panel that the discussion around assemblages will continue at the Annual Panel meeting in December, but that the way forward to make information on assemblages accessible to Museums could be by use of electronic media, notably the OASIS system. This might be a preferable route to allow the reduction of the administrative load, rather than the initial proposal which was for the TTU to decide, in certain cases, to unclaim assemblages unseen.

Coins and numismatic expertise

At the request of the Crown Office SC has produced a paper outlining problems associated with the foreseen lack of numismatic expertise. This has been submitted to the Scottish Government and a response is being awaited.

Discovery & Excavation Scotland

SC reported that the TTU currently spends £300 reproducing the TT allocations list in *Discovery & Excavation Scotland*, effectively reproducing information made available elsewhere. A discussion followed regarding whether to continue this practice and it was agreed that it is a good way of broadening outreach, especially to people who may not see the TTU website or Annual Report.

11. AOCB

F.O.I. enquiries

CW informed the Panel that the Crown Office is receiving a number of F.O.I. enquiries regarding the SAFAP minutes. CW suggested that the minutes be made available on the TTU website.

It was agreed that the minutes will be circulated in draft form to the Panel first to the chair and then to the Panel as promptly as possible after each meeting.

Next meeting
MARCH 2011

NMS Board Room

ACTIONS

IR will meet with the NCMD (SR) on the 7th of December. IR should be informed of any issues the Panel would like raised.